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AUTHOR Barr, Hugh
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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the extent to which experience in the schools of another country affected the educational philosophies and attitudes of University of Waikato (New Zealand) students taking part in an international student teacher exchange program in the United States. Six student teachers were interviewed individually concerning aspects of the United States education system they most liked and disliked, how their educational perspectives had been changed, and whether or not they would recommend such programs to other students. Specific questions and excerpts from student responses are reprinted. Results found that while all subjects highly approved of their overseas experience, the process strengthened their original perceptions and philosophies rather than introduce new ones. Students generally reported a preference for the New Zealand system of education, perhaps in part due to positive reactions among American teachers to the use of whole language teaching in New Zealand. (PB)

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International Teaching Experience and Student Teacher Perspectives of Education

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Hugh Barr
University of Waikato

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International Teaching Experience and Student Teacher Perspectives of Education

Introduction

This paper describes a small research project undertaken to ascertain the effects of an international student teacher exchange on the educational perspectives of the students taking part. In particular, the study sought to evaluate the extent to which an experience in the schools of another country affected the educational philosophies and attitudes of a group of University of Waikato students taking part in an international student teacher exchange programme to the United States. The project asked students to reflect on their experience of working in a foreign education system, to consider those aspects of the system they most liked and disliked, to relate how the experience had influenced their educational perspective and to suggest whether or not they would recommend a similar experience to other students.

Six students were questioned for this survey. Three,L,N, and H, currently in the fourth year of their degree, undertook their placement in the United States in 1993; the other three interviewees, D, I and T, are graduates now working as teachers in local schools. Four students are of European descent, two are Maori.Two students were older than average and both married, the other four were typical in age and background to the majority of pre-service elementary student teachers at Waikato. In general the sample is representative of the Waikato student teacher population in terms of ethnic balance, youth and maturity and socioeconomic background.

Student L	fourth year of degree	age on placement 19
Student N	fourth year of degree	age on placement 19
Student H	fourth year of degree	age on placement 20
Student D	graduate teacher	age on placement 24
Student I	graduate teacher	age on placement 30
Student T	graduate teacher	age on placement 19

Student teachers were interviewed individually, interviews were recorded and transcripts typed. Three interviews were conducted in the researcher's university office, three in schools after school hours. The questions put to the interviewees are included in Appendix one. They sought to ascertain the reasons students chose an overseas placement, their observations and impressions of a system different from their own, and the benefits to student teachers and the university that they saw in such placements.Transcripts and a draft of the final paper were made available to the interviewees for comment and correction.

The Nature of the Exchange Programme

The University of Waikato School of Education commenced a student teacher exchange programme with University A in 1988. Before establishing the exchange programme, a few Waikato students had been permitted to complete practica abroad in special circumstances. Students completed practica in Australia, Singapore and the Pacific Islands through special agreements made with the School of Education's Teaching Practice Department and schools and universities or teachers' colleges in the countries concerned. On these occasions supervision and placement were usually arranged on a grace and favour basis designed to suit the needs of individual students. This programme was not entirely successful, except perhaps as far as the students were concerned. It was usually difficult to arrange placement and supervision and the University had little control over the quality of university supervision and the calibre of the classroom teachers appointed as associate (cooperating) teachers.

The 1988 agreement with University A formalised this rather loose procedure. The University of Waikato and University A came to an arrangement through which American students completed their practicum in New Zealand under the supervision of faculty from the University of Waikato. In return it was agreed that Waikato students would complete their practica in the United States supervised by faculty from University A.

The exchange arrangements required a number of assumptions and a good deal of trust from both universities. It was assumed for example, that students from each institution could meet the requirements of their university in another country. The agreement required students from University A to complete their initial teaching degree at Waikato. Waikato students were required to meet part of the practical component of their degree under the supervision of faculty from University A . Both universities had to be certain that the calibre of the programmes and supervision offered would adversely affect neither the performance of the students on their university courses or their job opportunities after graduation.

The conditions of placement for each university were somewhat different. University A's degree required an 'end on' practicum, one long block of practical classroom experience which followed three or four years of university class work. University A students were in the main older than Waikato students and close to graduating but in most instances they had little practical teaching experience.

The teacher education programme offered at Waikato has a strong practical emphasis. Waikato students complete a school based practicum in the first eight weeks of their course of study and a further six week practicum at the end of their first year.
In their second and third years of study students are required to complete six week and eight week practica. Furthermore, a substantial proportion of most Curriculum (methods) courses and three compulsory courses in 'Professional Studies' is

classroom based. Thus, while Waikato students working in the United States tend to be younger than their American counterparts and minimally qualified in academic terms, they have had considerably more classroom experience.

Waikato students visiting the United States are normally in the second year of a four year degree programme. Waikato faculty consider a second year placement to be less disruptive and more appropriate than placements in years one or three. (Currently Waikato has no placement in year four). First year students are considered too young and inexperienced to undertake an overseas practicum and while the university is amenable to placing third year students in the United States, the third year practicum report is the one most important document students need to win a teaching position in New Zealand, and most Waikato students prefer to do their third year placement at home or in a school district in which they hope to be employed. The University of Waikato is currently revising its degree programme and the current pattern of teaching practice placement is likely to change. Waikato's new degree structure will require a practicum placement in year four of the undergraduate degree, when this becomes the case, overseas placements in the fourth year seem very likely.

An exchange in the students' fourth year is probably more appropriate. Most of the New Zealand students interviewed suggested that the exchange would have been more beneficial if they had had more experience in New Zealand schools. They felt that such experience would have provided them with a more substantial background from which they could make comparisons.

> **T.** Because I didn't really have the background experience in New Zealand schools I didn't have much to compare it with.

Effectively, the exchange programme requires each host university to teach the sister institution's course on its behalf. Both universities agreed to some flexibility in assessing and evaluating student progress; Waikato staff were advised that University A students could be assessed using either procedures followed in their own university or those used at Waikato.Waikato authorities were rather more rigid in their requirements, insisting that Waikato student teachers be assessed using the same system as that used for students remaining in New Zealand. Assessment procedures and criteria are quite different. University A uses a check list of requirements each rated on a 1 to 5 scale. The student is awarded a final grade on the basis of scores on this check list. Waikato use a more open system which involves supervising faculty to write comments under six or seven general headings. While Waikato reports are detailed and give a clear indication of student progress, Waikato students do not receive a final grade for their practicum.

When the University A faculty member who initiated the programme moved to University B, the programme was extended to that university. While there are major differences in the programmes offered at each of the two American universities, the procedures established for exchanges between Waikato student teachers and student teachers from University A were considered appropriate for student teachers from University B. University B requires a report in its own format in addition to the Waikato

reports and both American universities ask that students be given a grade for their teaching practicum, in other respects, all American students placed at Waikato follow the same pattern of placement, assessment and supervision. All three universities involved in the programme seem generally satisfied with the exchange programme and it grows larger each year.

To date 26 American students have visited Waikato and and 15 Waikato students have completed their practicum in the United States. Of the 26 American students, 10 came from University A, 15 from University B, and one from a third university.11 Waikato students have been place at University A and 4 at University B. Two other Waikato students have recently completed practica in the United Sates, one in New Hampshire and one in Minnesota. These placements were arranged through family or friends and have have not been considered for the purposes of this study.

The Programme and New Zealand Students

New Zealand students exchanging to the United States do not experience the cultural dissonance experienced by American students exchanging in this direction. American culture is pervasive even in this corner of the South Pacific. Waikato students watch CNN news and eat MacDonalds and Kentucky Fried Chicken. Teenagers in Hamilton wear Chicago Bulls ball caps, backwards, and follow NBA basketball. Brought up on a diet of Beverly Hills 90210 and the Simpsons they are as familiar with American fashions and mores as any kid in the United States. Moreover, the climate and culture of New Zealand and Australia lend themselves to an almost Californian life style in terms of dress, leisure activities and interests. For these, and other reasons, exchanges for Waikato students to the United States are not designed to improve cultural awareness or the students' ability to cope in multi cultural classrooms.One Waikato exchangee commented :

> L We know so much about America already that the cultural shock isn't as great as it would be for an American student coming here. I had a good idea what to expect when I went to the United States

New Zealand education is strongly bicultural. All student teachers are required to complete a basic course in Maori, and bicultural issues are a major feature of every primary school curriculum methods course. Because New Zealand is increasingly becoming a multi cultural nation, all students are further required to complete a compulsory course in working in multi cultural classrooms. While there would be obvious benefits for Waikato students in observing the techniques used by American teachers in multi cultural classrooms, Waikato student placements in the United States have not emphasised multi cultural issues. While University A and University B would no doubt provide placement for Waikato students in multi cultural American schools if this was requested, such placements have not been the norm. Of the six students interviewed four were placed in schools with predominantly white middle class students.Two, D and T were in lower socio economic areas with a higher proportion of Hispanic students. If fourth year Waikato students undertake exchanges in the future specific issues like multicultural education could become a feature of exchanges.

What Waikato students do find different in the United States is the school system. A major goal of the Waikato exchange programme is that Waikato student teachers experience and learn from the culture of the school. New Zealand's isolation has allowed us to develop a unique education system, one which has borrowed freely from other systems but one in which such borrowings have been modified and adapted to suit local circumstances. New Zealand student teachers are educated to fit into this system, a system unique to their country. The cultural change and cultural difference experienced by our students are found less in the overall cultures of the United States but in a specific part of that culture, the elementary school system.

Of course in many respects the mini culture of the school reflects the broader culture of the nation. Practices like the pledge of allegiance and holidays like Halloween and Thanksgiving are foreign to New Zealand students though they are certainly aware of them.The school curriculum is of course different in many respects, but probably more significant are differences in aspects of classroom management and organisation, teaching techniques, assessment, administrative procedures and programmes for teacher development. New Zealand student teachers are generally unfamiliar for example,with the use of specialist subject teachers in elementary schools, and classroom programmes based on the use of text books and work sheets.

Student Teacher Reaction

Student teacher responses to the questionnaire are analysed in the sections which follow. The researcher's comments reflect the general opinion of all the interviewees and the examples given represent general student opinion unless otherwise indicated.

Section One : Choices.

Question : Why did you choose to do your teaching practicum in the United States rather than in New Zealand?

Although all of the students interviewed had a genuine interest in American education, all admitted that the opportunity to travel to the United States was what initially attracted them to the programme. Students' reasons for choosing an overseas placement were generally more concerned with travel and adventure than with any purely educational purpose. Enthusiasm for learning about education in the United States increased in all cases as the time for departure grew closer.

T. The opportunity to travel was there and I just couldn't pass it up.

L. At first it was just an opportunity to travel and to see the world. Nearer the time the teaching became more important

D. Initially I was excited by the possibility of travelling overseas again. The Southwest of the United States was part of the country that interested me. I wanted the opportunity to travel and to broaden my experience as a teacher. It was an opportunity that I couldn't pass up.

H. To go to America. I just wanted to see how they live, and their schooling and teaching were part of that.

I. I wanted to visit an education system different from our own. I wanted to compare the two systems. I wanted the opportunity to go overseas, an opportunity I wouldn't have had if I hadn't gone through Waikato University.

Section Two : Expectations

Question : What expectations did you have about the American system? To what extent were your expectations accurate?

Students interviewed expected the American system to be considerably more structured, and teacher directed than the New Zealand schools with which they were familiar. They expected more formality in classrooms and a greater emphasis on written tests and formal assessment.

D. As far as the classroom management was concerned I had formed a mental picture of all the desks in neat tidy rows and the teachers being very correct.

I I had heard that American schools were very structured and that education was very formal.

L I imagined a structured system. I imagined it to be less personal than the schools here. I didn't have any idea about their curriculum but I imagined classroom management and teaching style to be very teacher directed.

N. I expected the classes to be a lot more structured (than New Zealand classrooms). I expected them to be really disciplined . I expected to see these little kids sitting at desks waiting to be told what to do.

Student preconceptions about American schools were based on information gathered from a number of sources. Aspects of American education are discussed in university classes at Waikato and many texts and journals used in students' studies originate in the United States. Although these sources were obviously significant, impressions gained from television and reading seem to have made a more powerful impression. Children's books about schooling in America and television programmes set in schools or about children were an important influence on all the interviewees.

L I guess I got most of my ideas from television and from things people had said

I I think a lot of my ideas were from old movies

H. From T.V. programmes. Probably from programmes like Beverly Hills 90210

N. A lot of my ideas came from books, not university books, but more from the kind of books you read when you are in high school.

T. I thought the schools would be like the ones they show on T.V. I was surprised to find poor children in my class

Two students had discussed American education briefly with a student who had been on a previous exchange and one had discussed education in the United States with American members of her church. All of the students except H had very clear ideas about what to expect.

All of the group agreed that it was both difficult and dangerous to generalise about the schools they saw. One found her school quite different from her expectations.

N. My school wasn't really what I expected. It was different from other schools in

the district. Whole language was the main focus of their programme and they used a lot of New Zealand (educational) literature

Most student teachers had an opportunity to visit classes and sometimes schools other than their own and they made it clear that differences between schools were marked. In general terms students found that even the most 'liberal' schools ran programmes which were considerably more teacher directed than those with which they were familiar in New Zealand. N and I were placed in schools considered 'liberal' but even in these schools many aspects of the classroom programmes and routines seemed strange to them.

I My school was nothing like I expected, in fact it was more like a New Zealand school. In a way I was disappointed because I really wanted to see the contrast.

Researcher So your expectations were wrong, you found the school to be very child centred?

I Yes, it was child centred with lots of activities. Some of the things I expected (of American education) were there but they were not as drastic as I expected.

Researcher. What kind of things?

I Like every child had to sit at their desk; they didn't have learning centres, the very disciplined way the children had to sit and be quiet, those kinds of things.

I's comments on the display of student work also illustrate her perception of this aspect of her classroom.

I. All the displays and bulletin boards were perfect. When we did do child centred activities the children's pictures were put in a corner where no-one would see them because they weren't quite perfect enough. It was a strong message that came through to me : this classroom has to look pleasant for parents and others when they come in. The children's ideas were there but the teacher presented them.

Most students agreed that in general terms American schools were pretty much as they expected. All acknowledged however, that there were great differences between schools and that some schools and classrooms did not match their original image.

L. Generally their style is very teacher directed and straight from the text book but I got introduced to another class which had a teacher who was very different.

Section Three : Impressions

Question : What things impressed you most?
Were there things that you disliked about your school?

The thing that impressed students most was resources. Every student interviewed commented on 'Fantastic resources and everything new' In the New Zealand elementary system the use of text books is rare and teachers are required to locate

and organise their own resource material. The student teachers' reaction to the resource material available in American schools probably reflects this.

H. New books, equipment, it was just there and available to teachers.

L. The amount of resources available to teachers is just incredible.

D. There didn't seem to be any lack of resources to do whatever you wanted. I did a series of art lessons and I said,' have you got this?' 'Yes,' they said, 'How much do you want? How many colours? Do you want rollers? One for each kid?' - it was heavenly.

N was impressed by the fact that teachers in her school were using 'whole language' techniques that she had not expected to see. All students were impressed by the professional attitudes of teachers toward their students and toward their profession.

I. I was impressed with the professional way the staff behaved and with the support they get within the school. There was lots and lots of staff inservice training (teacher development). I was very impressed with that.

L. Everyone was so friendly and they all seemed to enjoy their jobs so much.

Most students found nothing they really disliked and all were reluctant to criticise the American schools in which they were placed. They commented it was unfair to generalise about schools when they had seen so few and when they had arrived at the beginning of the school year before classroom routines were fully established. All the interviewees commented on disliking, big classrooms, lack of group work, desks in lines and teacher directed lessons but generally all of them agreed with H who stated

H There wasn't anything I really disliked, things were just very different.

And all commented on the difficulty of making definitive statements on American schools given their own relative lack of experience at the time.

T. Experiences like that mean much less if you haven't had experience that you can relate it to.

Section Three : Procedures

Question : What procedures and practices would you adopt in your classroom?
What things would you have liked to have changed?

Apart from one student ,L, who said 'none' all students discussed activities they had seen that they would use in their own classrooms. These were all practical classroom activities like routines for reporting current events, a classroom mathematics activity involving shopping, routines for editing language work and assessment activities.

T commented :

T. I had the opportunity to work with a group of special needs children and I got a lot of satisfaction from that. I have continued to develop my skills in this area and I find it very satisfying.

Students' comments on changes they would have liked to make in their American classrooms centred mainly around a perceived need for more activities which involved discussion and group cooperation as opposed to activities which were teacher directed or done individually. They all considered that there was a need in their classrooms for more interaction between students and between students and the teacher. Most classrooms had desks arranged in lines, something the New Zealand students found very strange. Even when desks were arranged in groups, the interaction the Waikato student teachers expected to see was not apparent.

H The desks were in groups but students were not supposed to interact or consult each other. It was always an individual learning proces- If you didn't know something you asked the teacher.

L I would have liked to have seen more child centred learning and have been able to integrate subjects.

New Zealand elementary school teachers are required to teach in all curriculum areas and pre-service teacher education programmes have compulsory methods classes in all elementary school subjects. All of the Waikato student teachers found the degree to which American elementary schools use specialist teachers for Physical Education, Art and Music disconcerting. They argued that this prevented teachers from getting to know their students better through enjoying 'fun activities' with them. They argued too that the use of specialists prevented classroom teachers from observing the creative ability of their students and aspects of student performance not associated with purely academic aspects of the curriculum.

N. I didn't like the use of specialist teachers for Art, Music and Physical education. We did all the 'heavy stuff' with the kids. There were no fun things, and you didn't get a chance to see any creative activities.

A corollary of this was what the Waikato student perceived to be a relatively strict division of the curriculum into clearly defined subject areas. They claimed that this gave teachers little opportunity to integrate subject matter and use thematic approaches to teaching and learning.

L. It wasn't possible to integrate subjects like Language with things like Art, Music and Movement.

T. Teachers had to teach so much much Math or so much Language in a week. I couldn't teach like that. If my kids are really into something we just carry on and make up the time in other subjects later.

The Waikato students were unfamiliar with teaching programmes using set text books as these are seldom used in New Zealand schools. D's comments on teacher planning and the use of textbooks are typical of those recorded from the others in the group.

D. I had planned to do a guided reading session while I was over there. There was a gap in the teacher's timetable so he asked if I wanted to do some reading. I photocopied a story from a (New Zealand School) journal, gave it to the kids and asked them to read certain passages, then I asked questions relating to the

passage. After the lesson the teacher asked me"Where did you get the questions from? Where did you get the story from?" thinking I presume, that they had come from a textbook. When I told him that I had read the story previously, the night before, and tried to form questions that would suit (the children's) perspective he was genuinely amazed. He was amazed that I would make up a lesson as I saw fit. Another point that illustrates this is a social studies lesson he gave. It seemed spontaneous. He was walking around the room saying, "Just imagine if this happened," and "What do think would happen if --?" but I happened to be reading the textbook and the teacher's words were almost word for word written down one column of the page. It would say "Start your lesson with this." So I can see how he would be unfamiliar with the spontaneity of my lesson.
American teachers, or at least the ones I encountered seem to stick to the text book.-- If a lesson isn't working then it's almost as if they get the idea that it is not their fault because they are doing what the book tells them to do.

Section Four : Supervision

Question : In what ways was your university supervision different from that you would have experienced in New Zealand?

Students placed at University B found their American supervisors extremely helpful and supportive. Most commented that their supervision was very similar to that they would have experienced in New Zealand in terms of support and frequency of visits. Students placed at University A were also pleased with the friendliness of their supervision but claimed that the supervision was considerably less rigorous than that they would have experienced in New Zealand.

D. One of the best things about doing section over there was that the supervision wasn't as strict as it would have been here.

Students found the system of recording and assessment strange. They were unfamiliar with the checklist system used by the American universities and argued that it was less useful than the verbal and written comments they were used to. They claimed that written comments not only indicated areas that needed improvement but suggested how this might be done.

L. The checklist just says whether you can do those things or not, it doesn't tell you how you could improve or tell you what things you did really well.

Section Five : Philosophy

Question : How has the visit affected your philosophy of education?

The sojourn in American classrooms appears to have strengthened students' appreciation of the New Zealand system that they are used to rather than affecting any substantial change.

L. It highlighted the good things we do. It made me aware of how important it is to have children involved in their learning

N. The experience reinforced what we do here (at Waikato). It made me think about what we do

H. It probably influenced the way I think about education more than I had realised. It opened my eyes and made me think about education. It made me appreciate how good education is in New Zealand.

D. Without sounding too grand , it affected my philosophy in that my idea of teaching and of life, is to make education relevant to the individual student, to run a student based or student centred classroom. Experiencing education in another country, certainly in the United States, reinforces for me the work that we do here and the system that we have

I. It's made me more determined to be the type of teacher where I make my classroom child centred, but I learnt this year, in my own classroom, that there needs to be a balance between that education system and this one. It has been hard for me to get that balance.

T. I don't know that the experience affected my philosophy at all. In some respects I might have got more from a section (teaching practicum) in Hamilton.

Section Six : Recommendation

Question : Would you recommend teaching practice in the United Sates for other Waikato students?

All the students were emphatic that they would strongly recommend Waikato students to complete their practicum in the United States. Their chief justification for this view was that they thought the experience would allow student teachers to to clarify their views of education and to assess things that they had previously taken for granted.Even T, whose placement was less than satisfactory, argued that other Waikato students should be given the opportunity to complete practica abroad.

L Being in a different educational setting really opens up your eyes. It makes you question your own beliefs.

H I learned so much -- meeting new people, going to their university, talking about schools, meeting other teachers, seeing different ways of organising classrooms. The whole experience was really worthwhile.

I. Yes, for the opportunity of seeing another education system. While I was there we talked a lot about their education system and about this one.

D. Yes the programme should continue. People often say you don't appreciate your own home until you go somewhere else and that's certainly the case. I feel better about myself as a teacher because a lot of the lessons that I adapted were more successful than those of Americans who stuck to the book. Experiencing another system makes you a much better teacher.

Conclusions

While all the student teachers interviewed strongly assert that the overseas exchange was a worthwhile exercise, the experience appears to have strengthened their original perceptions and philosophies rather than introducing any new ones. All the students had a clear image of American education and the way in which they thought American schools operated before they left New Zealand. Academic texts and professional journals were less important in establishing this view than television, film and fictional literature. All the students felt their original perception of American education was generally accurate though they conceded that individual,schools were not always as they expected.

The international experience forced the Waikato student teachers to critically evaluate the New Zealand education system they were used to, probably for the first time. The experience required them to assess both their system and the U.S. system, to judge the merits of each and to support any conclusions they made with valid examples. This appraisal of education in general, and their own system in particular, is an important outcome of this exchange programme. Commentators on equivalent programmes operating elsewhere have stressed the value of international exchanges in enhancing students' perception of their own society and their own education system. McKay, Montgomery and Quinn (1994), commenting on three programmes for American students, point out :

> The outcome of living abroad is an opportunity to see our culture, ourselves and others from a new perspective. In confronting the issue of diversity, we come face to face with our own world view. p.20

Working in American schools demonstrated to the Waikato students that there were other ways of doing things.The experience provided them with new exemplars of educational practice which became a basis for comparison with procedures and techniques they already knew. In every case the international experience strengthened the students' preference for their own system but this preference was based on careful, analysis and comparison of their system with that observed in the United States. Although the New Zealand students' preference for their own system is particularly marked, other research indicates, that there is some evidence of this trend in student teachers from other countries. (Carlson and Stenmalm - Sjoblom 1989).

Preference for the New Zealand system may have been reinforced by the reaction of American teachers to the New Zealand students. All the student teachers interviewed were involved in some kind of professional discussion with teachers, administrators university faculty and student groups while they were in the United States. This activity was encouraged by all three universities who considered the resulting exchange of information an important part of the exchange programme. American teachers who participated in these discussions were generally those who favoured a 'whole language' approach to teaching and learning, the positive reaction of these teachers to the New Zealand approach to learning may have strengthened the New Zealand students' preference of their own system.

Student teacher N commented

> **N.** Teachers asked me 'what do you do in New Zealand in this situation? How would you set up this programme in New Zealand?

The paucity of research in the area of international student teacher exchange makes it difficult to determine whether the reaction of the Waikato students to their experience abroad is evident in student teachers from other nations. Most American studies in this field have focussed on student teacher development of global literacy and cultural understanding, these have involved considering students' perceptions of the total society rather than the school system in particular. Barnhart's (1989) study for example, sought to assess student teacher development in affective, life enhancing and cognitive domains. Student teachers on Barnhart's survey indicated that the most significant effects of the experience were in the first two areas.Where responses concerning the cognitive domain were listed these were most often concerned with general aspects of the international experience like enhanced geographical skills, understanding of international affairs, an enlarged vocabulary and language skills.

The Waikato U.S.A exchange programme will certainly continue, faculty and students see enormous benefits deriving those fortunate enough to participate in it. The enhanced self confidence and self esteem noted in studies like Barnhart's are certainly evident in Waikato students as are the increased understanding and empathy for other cultures. The programme is professionally important because it encourages young teachers to look at education from new perspectives and to analyse and criticise aspects of their own system that they had previously taken for granted.

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Appendix

Questions

A 1 Why did you choose to do your teaching practice in the United States rather than in New Zealand ?

B 1 What expectations did you have of the American system in terms of curriculum, classroom management, assessment and teaching style?
B 3 To what extent were these expectations accurate / inaccurate?

C 1 What things about the American system impressed you most?
C 2 What things did you dislike?
C 3 What American procedures would you adopt, have you adopted in your own classroom?

D 1 In what ways was your university supervision different from that which you have experienced in New Zealand?

E 1 How has the visit affected your philosophy of education?
E 2 How has it affected your classroom practice?
E 3 Would you recommend teaching practice in the United States as a worthwhile experience for other Waikato student teachers.